

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 /060 W

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R 031120Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 146

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 5946

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, MOPS, PFOR, CB, US

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH ACTING PRIME MINISTER

REF: JAKARTA 3915

1. AFTERNOON OF MARCH 3 I DELIVERED TO ACTING PRIME MINISTER HANG THUN HAK MESSAGE FROM LONG BORET (REFTEL) IN WHICH HE ANNOUNCED HIS RETURN TO PHNOM PENH APRIL 6. I AVAILED MYSELF OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ASK HANG THUN HAK HOW HE SAW THE SITUATION IN THE CAPITAL. HE REPLIED THAT CERTAINLY THE LOSS OF NEAK LUONG WAS A SEVERE PSYCHOLOGICAL BLOW, BUT PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IS THE DISCOURAGING NEWS COMING OUT OF VIETNAM. MANY KHMERS ARE WONDERING RIGHT NOW WHETHER FANK CAN HOLD WHEN THE MUCH MORE POWERFUL SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMY IS RAPIDLY LOSING LARGE PORTIONS OF SOUTH VIETNAM TO THE ENEMY, I POINTED OUT THAT FANK IS NOT FIGHTING THE SAME ENEMY AS ARVN.

2. HANG THUN HAK ADMITTED THAT KHMER MORALE WAS LOW RIGHT NOW, BUT MEETINGS WERE PLANNED BETWEEN MILITARY AND CIVILIANS TO SHORE UP THE MORALE OF THE FIGHTING FORCES. I SAID I PLANNED TO TAKE MY CAR AND, WITH THE FLAGS FLYING, VISIT AS MUCH OF PHNOM PENH AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO SHOW TH CONTINUED PRESENCE OF
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THE US IN PHNOM PENH. HE THOUGHT THIS WAS AN EXCELLENT

IDEA.

3. I SPENT THE NEXT HOUR DRIVING THROUGH THE MORE
POPULATED SECTIONS OF THE CAMBODIAN CAPITAL, SHOWING
THE FLAG AND THEREBY DISPELLING RUMORS THAT THE
AMERICANS ARE LEAVING. WHILE THERE WERE A FEW GLUM
FACES, MANY BYSTANDERS SMILED AND POINTED WITH
SATISFACTION TO THE AMERICAN FLAG. I WISH I WOULD HAVE
MORE THAN JUST COSMETIC SUPPORT TO PROVIDE AT THIS
STAGE WHEN THE KHMERS ARE FACING THEIR MOST DIFFICULT
MOMENTS.

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